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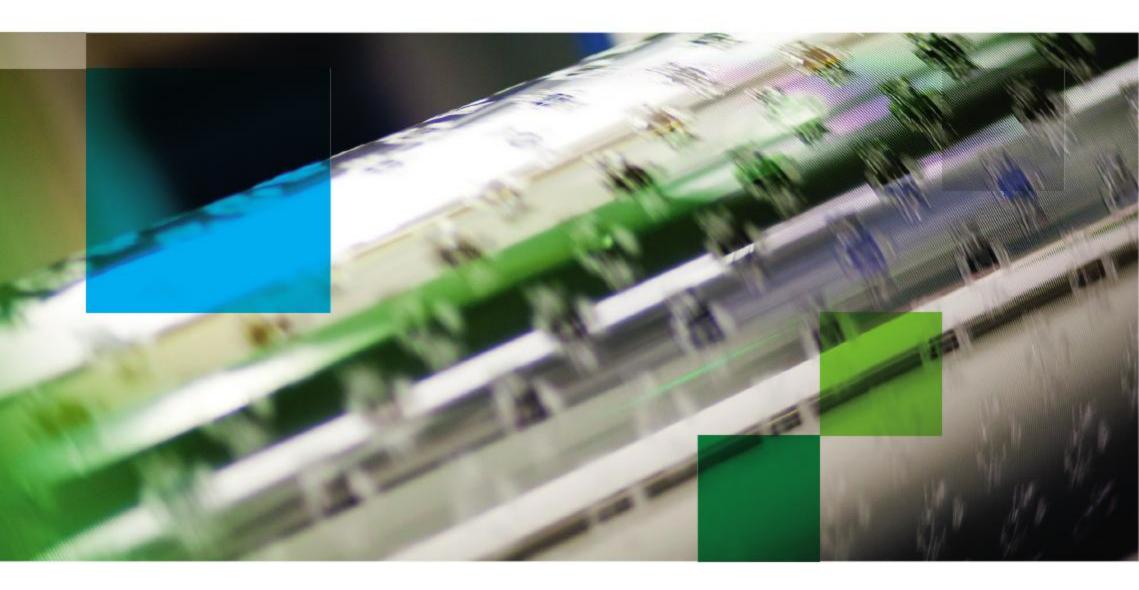
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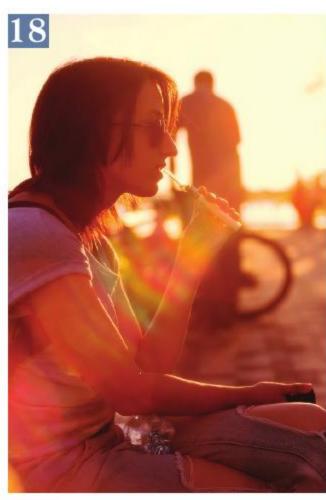
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This is Not a Cigar Premium cigars continue

to get lumped together with other types of tobacco products—most recently the suddenly suspect vape category— ignoring the vast differences in product composition and use. By John Geoghegan



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CAA, PTC Annual Meetings Cap Eventful Year

Tabacalera USA, Inc. president Javier Estades is re-elected chairman of Cigar Association of America (CAA), to serve a fifth year. Contributed report

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Substantial Equivalence and Premium Cigars

Eight years after the FDA issued its final rule to establish procedures for requesting an exemption from the substantial equivalence requirements of the "Tobacco Control Act," there are still no rules of the road. By Craig Williamson

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Efforts to Ban Flavored Tobacco Products Expand in 2019

Vape products may be the primary intended target, but bans continue to ensnare cigars and pipe tobaccos. By Thomas Briant

ON THE COVER

Sunset sky over the U.S. Capitol building dome in Washington, D.C. Photo: Bigstock/trekandshoot



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Editor's LETTER

Presstime Late-Breaking CRA-NATO News:

Illinois Supreme Court Strikes Down Chicago Tax on Tobacco Products

On December 19, the Illinois Supreme Court issued a ruling striking down a Chicago, Illinois ordinance that imposed local excise taxes on numerous tobacco products including cigars, smokeless tobacco, pipe tobacco, and roll-your-own cigarette tobacco. Originally passed by the Chicago City Council in 2016, the ordinance sought to impose local excise taxes of \$.20 per cigar, \$1.80 per ounce on smokeless tobacco products, \$.60 per ounce on pipe tobacco, and \$1.80 per ounce on roll-your-own cigarette tobacco.

A broad cross section of the industry commenced litigation seeking to have the Chicago tobacco product taxes ordinance overturned by the courts. The plaintiffs included the Cigar Association of America, the National Association of Tobacco Outlets, Inc., Iwan Ries & Co. (a Chicago tobacco and cigar store), the Illinois Association of Wholesale Distributors, the Illinois Retail Merchants Association, the International Premium Cigar and Pipe Retailers Association, and Arangold Corporation, dba Arango Cigar Co.

In the ruling, the Illinois Supreme Court held that Illinois state law specifically precludes a home rule city such as Chicago from adopting an excise tax on either cigarettes or other tobacco products unless the city had already adopted such a tax before July 1, 1993. While the City of Chicago had adopted a local tax on cigarettes prior to July of 1993, the city had not adopted a local excise tax on any other kind of tobacco product. As the Illinois Supreme Court states in the opinion, "we agree with plaintiffs that the statute allows only those municipal taxes on cigarettes or other tobacco products enacted prior to July 1, 1993" and that "allowing unlimited future taxes on all tobacco-based products for those municipalities that merely imposed a single tax on one tobacco product prior to July 1, 1993, as the City [of Chicago] argues, undermines the legislative purpose [to prevent additional taxes on tobacco products]."

In responding to the court ruling, Cigar Association President Craig Williamson and NATO Executive Director Thomas Briant stated that "this decision confirms our joint and long-held belief that the City of Chicago exceeded its authority in adopting excise taxes on other tobacco products. Retail stores can now focus on offering their customers the tobacco products they prefer without an unnecessary and burdensome local excise tax."

PCA PAC: Be a Voice for Our Industry

The Premium Cigar Association's Political Action Committee (Premium Cigar PAC) gives everyone in the industry the opportunity to engage in the political process firsthand. Through the PAC, there are multiple opportunities to make your voice heard and contribute to the future of the premium cigar and pipe tobacco industry. The Premium Cigar PAC is PCA's bi-partisan advocacy tool to support worthy candidates for federal office and form relationships with policymakers who understand the value of our unique industry. Help fund the fight and by joining the Premium Cigar PAC: every dollar goes to supporting pro-premium tobacco candidates for election to Congress and to help advance industry priorities. Visit premiumcigars.org/advocacy/pac/ for details.

SMOKESHOP

Editor & Associate Publisher E. Edward "Ted" Hoyt III

Production Coordinator Melinda Ayala

Contributors Thomas Briant,

John Geoghegan, Craig Williamson

LOCKWOOD TRADE JOURNAL CO., INC.

President & Publisher Robert M. Lockwood

Bookkeeper Roxanne

Cordova-Melendez

ADVERTISING SALES

Robert M. Lockwood, President & Publisher Tel: (212) 391-2060, ext. 109 robert@lockwoodpublications.com

George Lockwood

Special Sales Representative Tel: (413) 548-9700 | Fax: (413) 548-9722 167 Shutesbury Road, Leveret, MA 01054 lockwood.george@gmail.com

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FAVORITES









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Retailing NEWS ** TRENDS & TRENDS & TRENDS ETTERS IN TOBACCO RETAILING

Premium Cigars Exempted from Catalog, Online Tobacco Sales Ban in "Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act" But \$12 Cigar Threshold, Online Pipe Tobacco Ban, Complete Flavor Ban, Remain

WASHINGTON, D.C.— The "Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act" (H.R. 2339) passed a House Energy and Commerce Committee's Health Subcommittee vote in November and then favorably reported to the full House of Representatives by a vote of 28-24.

The bill included late amendments including language that exempted premium cigars (defined as those over \$12 in value, among other attributes), a development touted by industry groups who led the fight as a rare victory and glimmer of hope that educating legislators about the unique qualities of premium cigars may finally be making some headway.

The bill is one of several efforts introduced by legislators in response to national concerns of escalating youth vaping trends, would ban flavor and all non-face-to-face sales for all tobacco products. The premium cigar industry had been working to separate hand rolled cigars from such bills, arguing that the legislative crackdown on these products do not meet the intended goals of the legislation.

Upon passage of the "manager's amendment," J. Glynn Loope, executive director of CRA, stated, "The step forward that this bill facilitates is the recognition that there is, in fact, a class of cigars recognized as 'premium,' which deserves differing consideration by Congress, and the FDA, alike. While much work remains, this message is notable."

H.R. 2339 was originally introduced in April 2019 by Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), who also serves as the House Energy and Commerce Chairman. Among other things, the bill would also:

- Require FDA to finalize a rule requiring graphic health warnings for cigarette packages within 12 months;
- Extend FDA regulations on the sale, distribution, and use of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco to all deemed tobacco products, including e-cigarettes;
- Raise the minimum age for purchasing tobacco products to 21 years and makes it unlawful for any retailer to sell a tobacco product to any person younger than 21 years of age;
- Direct FDA to prohibit non-face-to-face sales of all tobacco products including e-cigarettes and e-cigarette accessories;
- Prohibit all characterizing flavors of tobacco products, including menthol;
- Provide FDA with authority to collect user fees from all classes of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, and:
- · Instruct FDA to issue a final rule on the regulation of products containing synthetic nicotine or nicotine that is not made or derived from tobacco.

Bits&Pieces

■ Support for H.R. 1854, the "Traditional Cigar Manufacturing and Small **Business Jobs Preservation** Act of 2019," continues to grow in the U.S. House of Representatives. Congressmen Thomas Massie (R-KY), Morgan Griffith (R-VA), and David Rouzer (R-NC), and Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC) are the latest members of the House to have joined as co-sponsors to a premium cigar exemption from U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulation in the House. If your house member is not one of the current 83 co-sponsors, visit the CRA website at cigarrights.org to send them a message voicing your support for H.R. 1854. The final rule contains regulatory requirements that will cause irreparable economic damage to Main Street America small businesses, premium cigar manufacturers, and severely limit consumer choice.

New&Notable

Justin Jacobson, owner of King Corona Cigars in Ybor City, Tampa, is opening a second location of the local institution founded by Brenda Garcia Barco and her late husband Don in 1998 as an extension of the Garcia family's cigar factory, Tampa Rico Cigar Company. The new 2,100 sq. ft. cigar bar, located in the outdoor restaurant area of International Plaza mall on Bay Street, will have a more upscale flavor than the original

King Corona Cigars location, focusing on cigars, liquor, and coffee, says Jacobson, who purchased King Corona Cigars from the Barcos in 2017. An early 2020 opening is anticipated.

Jason and Amanda Phebus of Parma, Michigan have revealed plans to open their sixth Corona Smoke Shop in Michigan. The new shop, located in a former furniture store in downtown Coldwater, could also be the family-owned company's largest location to date at 5,000 square feet,

if plans come to fruition. Like the other Corona Smoke Shop locations (in Jackson, Battle Creek, Okemos, Albion, and Eaton Rapids) the new store will include a walk-in premium cigar humidor and a full range of tobacco merchandise including pipe tobaccos, imported cigarettes, RYO supplies, and smoking accessories. In addition, the new site will feature several smoke-friendly lounges including a cigar-only bar where customers will be able to purchase alcoholic drinks for on-site consumption.

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Industry NEWS *** PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION, REGULATION, TRADE

AJ Fernandez Now Distributing Viva La Vida Cigars

MIAMI—AJ Fernandez Cigar Company is not only the manufacturer of Viva La Vida cigars, but effective this fall is now the distributor of the brand as well. Former New York City cigar retailers Billy and Gus Fakih released the brand in March and have now agreed to use AJ Fernandez' sales force across the country. Billy and Gus will remain actively running daily operations which includes store visits, events, and overall brand management.



Viva La Vida comes in five sizes—Robusto, Toro, Torpedo, Gran Toro, and Diadema Fina. The cigars range in price from \$10.50 to \$14.50 before taxes.

"I have known Billy and Gus since I launched the San Lotano brand," says company founder and master blender Abdel J. "AJ" Fernandez, "and they were one of the first and best supporters while operating the Cigar Inn in New York City. We maintained a great relationship since then, after they sold the store. I'm proud to not only call them business associates, but great friends as well."

Viva La Vida is wrapped in a Habano Oscuro 2000 wrapper paired with a Corojo 99 binder and Criollo 98 filler tobaccos. proprietary tobaccos developed by AJ and grown on his own family farms in Nicaragua.

Billy Fakih explains "What attracted us to Abdel was not only the great cigars he blends and creates, but also how loyal, humble, and disciplined he is which reflects in his cigars."

Arango Cigar Co. Launches **New Website**

NORTHBROOK, ILL.— Arango Cigar Co. has launched a totally new website, arangocigarco.com. Arango is the midwest's largest importer/distributor of extensive lines of premium cigars, briar pipes, pipe tobaccos, and smoker's accessories.

Arango's entire inventory can be viewed on this website. Once registered, retailers can see descriptions, photos, pricing, and ordering details. The site also includes announcements of new products as well as monthly and special promotions.

Michael Gold, Arango's president says, "Our customers have told us that our huge and diverse line-up of products, same-day shipping and knowledgeable customer service/sales,make Arango a pleasant and easy one-stop shopping experience. This exciting new site can only add to the retailer's ability to fill their smoke shop and customer needs, on a quick and efficient basis."

STG to Close its Lane, Ltd. Factory in Tucker, Georgia

COPENHAGEN—Scandinavian Tobacco Group A/S announced it will close its manufacturing facility at Scandinavian Tobacco Group Lane Ltd. in Tucker, Georgia and move

production to its manufacturing facilities in Assens and Holstebro, Denmark, and in Santiago, Dominican Republic. The closure, which will reduce the group's production facilities globally from 12 currently

to 11, is expected to be completed by the end of 2020.

The Tucker facility manufactures pipe tobaccos including Captain Black, Sir Walter Raleigh, Half & Half, Paladin, Velvet, Granger, Smoker's Pride, an extensive range of Lane bulk blends, as well as private label brands; little cigars including Captain Black and Winchester; and fine-cut tobaccos Bugler and Kite.

"As these markets are declining, excess capacity across Scandinavian Tobacco Group's manufacturing footprint has been established," STG said in a statement. "The closure of the facility in Tucker will adjust total capacity to current and projected volumes and is expected to improve the group's overall annual cost structure by more than \$2.98

million (20 million Danish Krone) when fully implemented by the end of 2020.

The transfer of production is expected to incur investments of about \$4.47 million (DKK 30 million). STG said the possible sale of land and

buildings could provide additional proceeds.

According to Leonard Wortzel, vice president of marketing and product development, STG Lane, only the manufacturing facility in Tucker will be closing: distribution, sales, and marketing operations of STG Lane's commercial organization will remain intact.

Scandinavian Tobacco Group acquired Lane, Ltd. from Reynolds American, Inc. in 2011 for \$205 million in cash. At the time, STG said Lane would contribute annual earnings of \$45 million and sales volumes of 525 tons of pipe tobacco, 980 tons of fine-cut tobacco, and 450 million little cigars.

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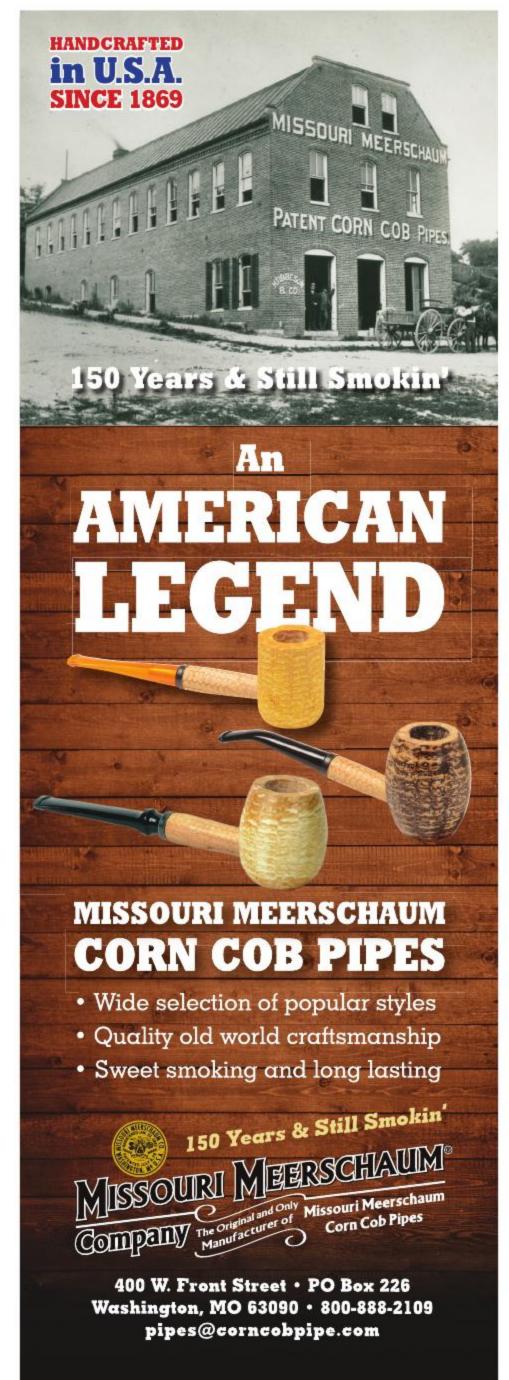
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Industry

► Personnel Moves

> Scandinavian Tobacco Group (STG) announced that Craig Reynolds, executive vice president of STG and president of the company's North American Online and Retail Division (NAO&R) will transition full leadership responsibility of the NAO&R division to Sarah Santos, currently senior vice president of STG's North American Online Business, effective January 1, 2020. Santos' title will be president of the company's North American Online and Retail Division (NAO&R) and senior vice president of STG.

Reynolds will support the transition of the NAO&R division until May 31, 2020 when he will officially retire from the company. Following his retirement,



Santos



Reynolds

Reynolds will continue to stay on in a consultancy role for STG and the NAO&R division at least until December 2020. Santos started at Cigars International in 2003 as an external marketing consultant and joined the company as a full-time employee in 2008. She has since held various leadership roles in marketing and operations and was promoted to senior vice president in early 2018.

> Garo Cigars, Glendale, Calif., has named Ron Arellano as the company's national brand manager. Arellano, who is owner

of The Refuge Cigar Lounge in Redlands, Calif., joined the Garo Cigars sales team earlier this year after rediscovering the brand at an IPCPR trade show. Previously, Arellano served as national brand manager for Bombay Tabak (MBombay Cigars). Dr. Garo Bouldoukian, president and founder Garo Cigars who overseas all blending and production, said the hiring of a national brand manager will allow the



Arellano

company to grow nationwide as it expands its efforts to establish retailer partnerships in major cities through the U.S.

> Rick Ardito has joined The Bugatti Group, LLC as national sales director. Ardito most recently served as executive brand

manager for The Upsetters at Foundation Cigar Company. Previously he served as vice president of sales and marketing for 7-20-4 Cigar Company and was a partner and executive vice president of public relations at Drew Estate before retiring from the firm in 2010. A practicing metaphysician and published author, Ardito has also served in numerous positions in a variety of non-cigar industries.



Ardito



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Calendar

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Puro Sabor 2020 Nicaraguan Cigar Festival

Managua, Granada, and Estelí, Nicaragua. Contact: Nicaraguan Chamber of Tobacco (CNT), Email: nicaraguancigarfestival.com, Web: nicaraguancigarfestival.com.

JANUARY 29-31, 2020 Tobacco Plus Expo (TPE) 2020

Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev. Tobacco, vape, alternative, and general merchandise show; educational tracks including conferences and round tables. Web: tobaccoplusexpo.com.

FEBRUARY 16-21, 2020

Procigar Festival 2020

La Romana and Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic. Premium cigar festival featuring cigar factory and tobacco farm tours, seminars and tastings, excursions, dinner parties, golf tournament, poker tournament, and charity auction. Contact: ProCigar, Web: procigar.org.

FEBRUARY 24-26, 2020

Convenience Distribution Marketplace 2020

Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort & Spa, San Antonio, Texas. Presented by Convenience Distribution Association (CDA). Convenience products wholesale distribution conference featuring distributor-focused education sessions, annual awards luncheon, networking events, and highly-targeted one-day marketplace show floor. Contact: CDA, Reston, Va., Tel: (703) 208-3358, Web: cdaweb.net.

FEBRUARY 24-28, 2020 22nd Habanos Festival

Havana, Cuba. Tobacco plantation and cigar factory visits, trade fair and seminars, international habanosommelier contest, cigar rolling master class, social events. Contact: Habanos S.A., Web: festivaldelhabano.com, habanos.com.

MARCH 22-26, 2020

TAA 52nd Annual Convention

Sheraton Grand Los Cabos Hacienda del Mar, Los Cabos, Mexico. Members only. Contact: Tobacconists' Association of America, Tel: (770) 597-6264, Email: info@thetaa.org, Web: thetaa.org.

APRIL 4, 2020

23rd Annual Raleigh Pipe & Tobacco Expo

N.C. State Fairgrounds, Gov. James E. Holshauser Building, Raleigh, N.C. Hosted by the Triangle Area Pipe Smokers (TAPS). Artisan pipe carvers, estate sellers, accessories, tobacco and pipe importers, distributors, and more. Contact: TAPS, Tel: (919) 848-0685, Email: show@tapsclub.us, Web: tapsclub.us.

MAY 2-3, 2020

Chicagoland Tobacciana Show

The Mega Center, Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, III. Pipe & tobacco marketplace. Contact: Craig Cobine, Chicagoland Pipe Collectors Club, porshcigar@aol.com, Tel: (630) 236-6202, Web: chicagopipeshow.com.

JULY 10-14, 2020

PCA 88th Annual Convention and International Trade Show

Sands Expo Center, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact: Premium Cigar Association (PCA), Washington, D.C., Tel: (202) 621-8064, Email: info@premiumcigars.org, Web: premiumcigars.org.

NATO Boosts TPE 2020 Trade Show Presence

LAS VEGAS-With the Tobacco Plus Expo 2020 (TPE) shaping up to be a must-attend event for the New Year, show organizer Tobacco Media Group, Inc. (TMG) announced its continued support and partnership with the National Association of Tobacco Outlets (NATO), which will have a significant presence at the show. TPE 2020 will be held Wed., January 29, 2020 through Friday, January 31, 2020 at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

With over 60,000 member retail stores, NATO works tirelessly to protect the rights and interests of tobacco retailers and consumers, while influencing significant business decisions and legislation. NATO is a resource to all, disseminating details on FDA regulations and local, state, and federal legislative issues regarding tobacco, e-cigarettes & vapor, adult rights, and retailer freedoms. TMG has battled regulations right alongside

NATO, using Tobacco Business, their popular magazine, as a means of distributing information and being a reputable resource for the latest industry news.

Like many in the industry, TMG and their parent company, Kretek International, Inc. also support NATO to fight legislation and regulations that affect the entire tobacco business. In addition, TMG is dedicated to elevating the organization by bringing NATO to TPE Trade Show and bringing the industry to NATO.

NATO will have a strong presence at this year's show, occupying a booth with team members offering information and insight to attendees and exhibitors. They will also be leading several of TPE 2020's Ignite educational sessions, speaking on market trends and current tobacco legislation and FDA regulations.

"We see the TPE show as a huge opportunity to partner with organizations

-INTERNATIONAL-

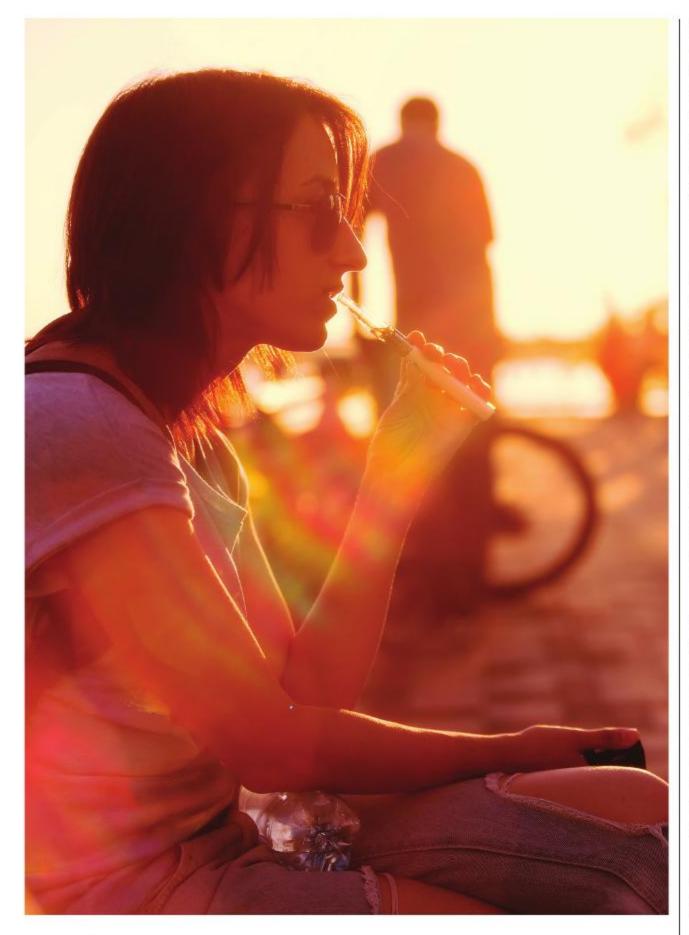
like NATO," says Ben Stimpson, managing director of the Tobacco Media Group, Inc. "NATO executive director Thomas Briant and his team are leading a comprehensive and imperative legislative charge to help educate and fight for all businesses in the tobacco industry. The information we share helps their legislation efforts at the local and state levels and strengthens our industry as a whole. NATO is the ace in all of our pockets."

The first major tradeshow of the year for the tobacco and alternative industries, TPE 2020 brings together retailers, distributors, manufacturers, and industry media for three days of solid business, networking, learning, and fun. For information. visit tobaccoplusexpo.com.

THIS IS COUNTRY

dan@native.net

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.



This is Not a Cigar

Premium cigars continue to get lumped together with other types of tobacco products—most recently the suddenly suspect vape categoryignoring the vast differences in product composition and use. Premium cigars must continue their difference and the need for appropriate regulation specific this product. > BY JOHN GEOGHEGAN

f you're trying to figure out the swamp of regulatory logic being ap-■ plied equally to cigars and e-vapor

products, you need look no further than the FDA's mushy standards and the confusing statements coming from

the White House. The White House gets a pass because they haven't been paying attention. Russia, the middle-east, North Korea, and global trade seem to be more important. The FDA, not so much. Getting this right should not be so hard. The rules don't need to be the same. The FDA has implied as much, but not much has been done about it.

A premium cigar is a roll of tobacco wrapped in tobacco, made predominantly by hand. The countries of origin, sizes, flavors, taste profiles, nicotine content, tars, and combustible toxins haven't changed much in 100 years. An e-vapor device does not contain tobacco. It's an electro-mechanical vaporizer, with a computer chip and battery activated by airflow, and a heating coil that aerosolizes an e-liquid containing mostly propylene glycol, imitation flavors, and nicotine. Since their inception, e-vapor devices have become more complex and adjustable, but the idea is the same. Ask the patent holders.

About three years ago vape manufacturers, notably Juul Labs and Imperial, discovered that by blending nicotine salts instead of distilled nicotine into their e-liquids, they could nearly double the previous ratio of nicotine to e-liquid volume in their vape devices. This would also make their vapor less harsh to inhale. We have seen the results in the form of burgeoning teen addiction. So has the FDA. Where are the limits?

Then, a little over a year ago, state-level legalization of marijuana expanded. This led to the bright idea that THC should be included in e-liquids. Extracted forms of THC found their way into e-cigarettes, vape devices, and e-liquids. Who knew this would happen? Everybody.

To improve the viscosity and volume of the THC vape oils, vitamin E acetate and other untested ingredients were added to e-liquids and put on the market with little or no regulation from the FDA. Actual product volume was north of 5 million bottles of e-liquids and pods for sale.

We have now seen the unintended and unregulated consequences in terms of lung illness and death due to blocked

airways and infections. It should be added here that in European countries, where nicotine levels and ingredients in e-vapor devices are strictly regulated, none of this has occurred. Only in America.

Thank you Judge Leon.

Premium handmade imported cigars are enjoying a renaissance in quality and visibility, due in part to partnerships between cigar makers and

tobacco control over to the FDA. Since then, we haven't made much progress except for warning labels that have worked fine for 19 years. We can do bet-

> Premium cigars are of little or no interest to teens, and adult premium cigar smokers don't have much interest in vape. Two completely different users, two very different products: one the result of agriculture and tradition, the other the result of industrial design. Both facing



identical regulation and restrictions. It shouldn't be this way.

All of this has gone on with no substantive changes to the regulation of vape products by the FDA, except to send a series of hand-wringing PR releases to congress, and to submit proposed modifications to the PMTA application format to speed things up. The FDA had the chance to regulate allowable nicotine levels. They have had the chance to regulate vape flavors for nearly five years. They had the chance to disallow Nicotine Salts. All they had to do was read the strict EPA regulations carrying stiff penalties for the unreported sale or transfer of Nicotine Salts. In their own data and explanations, Juul told the FDA that for 32 percent of young users a Juul device was the first use of nicotine. This finally made the light bulb go off.

2019 marked the 10th anniversary of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (FSPCTA) giving the FDA the deeming authority to regulate any tobacco product with a negative effect on public health among smokers and non-smokers alike. Nine years ago the FDA lost their suit to gain control over e-vapor products as medical devices. Federal District courts were having none of it. Vape products contained nicotine, looked like a cigarette, and tasted (sort of) like a cigarette, so e-cigarettes and e-liquids became tobacco products. It took the FDA six more years to achieve control, even after it was handed to them.

retailers, and the not-so-free publicity that goes with fighting for singularity. The premium cigar industry has, with great effort, successfully raised its profile in Washington.

At the same time, the twin e-vapor crises of teen nicotine addiction and THC e-liquid illness and fatalities made the news. For some reason, these two trends have been conflated by regulators and congress into one issue. Premium cigars are of little or no interest to teens, and adult premium cigar smokers don't have much interest in vape. Two completely different users. Two very different products, one the result of agriculture and tradition, the other the result of industrial design. Both facing identical regulation and restrictions. It shouldn't be this way.

About 22 years ago, I was part of an entourage to Washington that met with the same house subcommittee that is currently looking at an equitable approach premium cigars. We had a narrower objective then; to agree to a consent decree by the seven major cigar companies to standardize federal cigar warning labels without killing off 2 billion dollars in commerce and maybe wrecking the economies of several Caribbean countries.

The warning labels were agreed to, but with caveats. Vape wasn't invented for another five years. The FTC handed



> These are not cigars. An open system vape box mod (left), and Juul, the market-leading cartridge-based closed system vape device (right).

CAA and PTC Annual Meetings Cap Eventful Year

Javier Estades has been re-elected chairman of Cigar Association of America (CAA) to serve a fifth year. > CONTRIBUTED REPORT

t this year's 83rd annual meeting of the Cigar Association of America, held November 7-9, members heard about the challenges and opportunities facing the industry at the close of an eventful year. Joining the gathering was the Pipe Tobacco Council (PTC) which also held its annual meeting and participated in events.

The setting—the Breakers Hotel & Resort in West Palm Beach, Fla.—couldn't have been more conducive to enjoying fine cigars and discussing important industry issues-and celebrating with industry colleagues and guests.

An educational part of the conclave included presentations by CAA's federal lobby team on the ever-changing political landscape and how members will be impacted. Other presentations included key topics affecting the industry, particularly Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulation of the cigar industry. There was extensive discussion on questions including the current status of premarket review requirements and on the practical, logistical and financials concerns looming over possible harmful and potentially harmful constituents (HPHC) testing.

Elected to a serve a fifth year as chairman of CAA was Javier Estades, president of Tabacalera USA. "Thankfully, through our long-term planning, strategic thinking, and teamwork, our unity as an industry is paying dividends," he said summarizing the year for members and guests gathered at the historic resort.

CAA's president Craig Williamson shared with members how CAA continues to be a leading advocate on behalf of its members by opposing unfair and unreasonable federal and state legislation that would negatively impact the cigar industry.

"Our work this year has taken us

from statehouses to courthouses to the White House, Williamson said. "I also want to acknowledge the unbelievable help we've received from many friends across the country," he said. "We are not alone in this fight."

2019 CAA STATE LEGISLATIVE YEAR IN REVIEW & 2020 OUTLOOK

CAA had a big hand in defeating a number of serious legislative threats in 2019, and the association expects 2020 to be challenging on several fronts. Legislators in 21 states proposed cigar tax increase and all but one tax increase-in Maine-was defeated. While 2020 is an election year, and elected officials tend to shy away from passing higher taxes the same year they face voters, CAA expects to face tax challenges ahead.

Proposed nexus legislation is another threat to cigar makers. In short, nexus legislation generally requires an out-ofstate retailer to collect and remit sales tax once the retailer meets a set level of sales transactions or gross receipts activity (a threshold) within the state. No physical presence is required. While 42 states have a nexus standard in place, only Kansas, Missouri and Florida have yet to enact such a standard for remittance of state sales tax. CAA is working to ensure that any efforts to require online retailers to collect and remit state taxes are constitutional and are done in the least burdensome way possible.

Bills that would have banned the sale of flavored tobacco products, including cigars and pipe tobacco, were proposed in California, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, New Mexico, New York, and Utah. In each of these states, the proposals were actively opposed by CAA and were defeated. Only Massachusetts passed such a ban. Bills that would have unreasonably re-



> L. to r.: Craig Reynolds, executive vice president, STG; Javier Estades, president, Tabacalera U.S.A.; Craig Williamson, president, CAA.

stricted the sale of certain cigar and pipe tobacco products were also defeated in Hawaii, New Jersey, and New York.

Bills that would have further restricted the ability to smoke in cigar bars, retail tobacco shops, and other public spaces were defeated in Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Oklahoma and Tennessee. A bill requiring the licensing of out-of-state retailers of tobacco in Montana was defeated, with opposition from CAA. It should be noted that the Colorado bill as introduced would have eliminated the exemption to the Clean Indoor Air Act for cigar bars and retail tobacco businesses; tobacco retailers in Colorado were instrumental in defeating that provision.

With the continuing national focus on vaping and e-cigarettes, the industry can expect to see a significant number of states focusing on flavor legislation, not just on vapor products but all tobacco products as well.

"CAA is ready to meet the challenges ahead in 2020 and beyond by continuing to pursue its vision of ensuring that there is a strong, vibrant, and growing cigar industry for the years ahead," said Estades, CAA's chairman.

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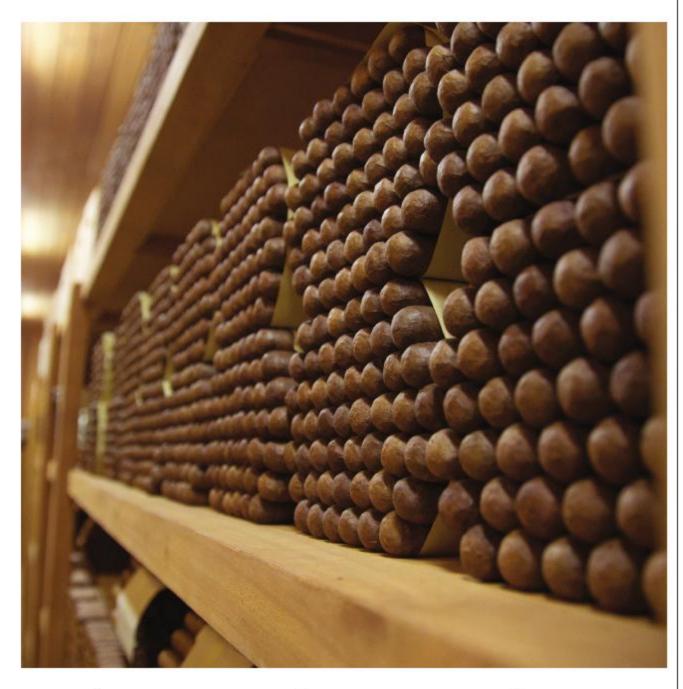
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Substantial Equivalence and Premium Cigars

Eight years after the FDA issued its final rule to establish procedures for requesting an exemption from the substantial equivalence requirements of the "Tobacco Control Act," there are still no rules of the road. > BY CRAIG WILLIAMSON

Since 2011, the tobacco industry—first cigarettes and smokeless tobacco, and now cigars and pipe tobacco—has sought to navigate the uncharted waters of FDA's Substantial Equivalence process. After nine years, and with filing deadlines looming, FDA has yet to provide promised "rules of the road," outlining an SE Process that is practical and sensible, and that takes into account the very different nature of various products.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Before a "new" tobacco product (one not on the market as of February 15, 2007) may be introduced for commercial distribution in the United States, the product must undergo premarket review by FDA. One of the premarket review pathways is through the submission of a Substantial Equivalence Report ("SE Report"), demonstrating that the product is "substantially equivalent" to a predicate tobacco product. While this

SE pathway, on the surface, may appear manageable, FDA's lack of clarity and guidance with respect to the SE process has left this pathway riddled with confusion and inconsistency from 2011, when provisional SE Reports for cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products were due, through today.

Under the Tobacco Control Act, the filing of a Provisional SE Report for originally regulated products allowed the product to remain on the market while being reviewed by FDA. Nearly 3,600 Provisional SE Reports were filed by the statutory deadline of March 2011 with no guidance from FDA other than a brief and insubstantial guidance document posted less than three months before these reports were due. Because of this lack of guidance, these Provisional Reports lingered for seven years, when-without explanation-FDA removed about 1,500 of them from review, allowing them to remain on the market.

Upon the Final Deeming Rule going into effect, the deadline for submission of SE Reports for products on the market as of August 8, 2016 was February 2018, but this deadline was ultimately extended to August 8, 2021. This extension was to give FDA time to put in place the so-called "rules of the road" for manufacturers to follow in filing the SE Reports for cigars and pipe tobacco.

In October 2018, the FDA held a public meeting in an attempt to "improve public understanding and to seek feedback on the policies and processes for the submission and review of tobacco product marketing applications." This meeting, while helpful, still did little to shed light on what cigar SE Reports would need to contain. Industry was still without sufficient information from the FDA, only walking away with "appendix" documents for various products, crafted on perceived "deficiencies" in reports filed with FDA—yet virtually no SE Reports for cigars had been filed with FDA at that point in time.

Finally, in April 2019, FDA issued its Proposed Rule governing the "Content and Format of Substantial Equivalence Reports," which was the first time industry was given a glimpse of what the "rules

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of the road" for an SE Report would look like. At nearly the same time as comments on this Proposed Rule were due, Judge Grimm in the District of Maryland vacated the Guidance document that extended the SE Report deadline, and instead imposed a deadline of May 2020 for SE Reports. This decision is currently subject to numerous legal challenges.

WHAT'S NEXT?

With the Proposed SE Rule, the industry admittedly has more guidance than it previously had. The Proposed SE Rule, however, still leaves unanswered numerous questions concerning the content of SE Reports, especially for cigars. As CAA noted in its extensive comments on the Proposed SE Rule, it takes a "one size fits all" approach to SE Reports, failing to appreciate the differences between product categories, and that cigars are a heterogeneous product category. Among others, the cigar industry will have to deal with the following hurdles in preparing SE Reports:

- FDA has failed to define any design parameters for cigars.
- FDA does not appreciate that, with respect to many cigars, HPHC testing will be of little to no value as there are no reliable and reproducible methodologies for this testing.
- FDA has not informed the cigar industry what HPHCs to test for.
- FDA has not finalized the rulemaking on whether and how premium cigars could be exempt from regulation.

These substantive issues related to the content of SE Reports is putting aside the more significant timing issue, as the deadline for submission of SE Reports has now been accelerated by a staggering 14 months, from August 2021 to May 2020.

This significantly accelerated deadline creates substantial hurdles for industry. Even assuming that the Proposed SE Rule is released by the end of 2019, this does not leave sufficient time for companies to necessarily prepare the "quality" SE Reports FDA is looking for. This deadline also ignores many practical issues that the industry will face, such as the fact that, even if FDA told cigar manufacturers how and what HPHCs to test for, labs are currently at full capacity as they separately handle testing for Pre-Market Tobacco Applications for e-cigarette products.

So, eight years later, the SE process is still in a state of disarray. To the extent FDA had started to make any meaningful progress on outlining the "rules of the road," that progress has been trampled on by way of an irresponsibly accelerated deadline.

CAA will continue to fight on behalf of the entire cigar industry to make the SE Report process fair, achievable and practical.

Craig Williamson is president of the Cigar Association of America, Tel: (202) 223-8204, Web: cigarassociation.org.

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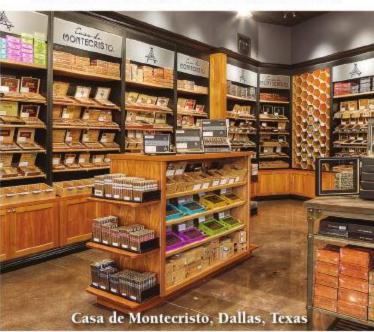
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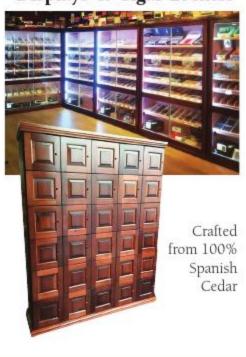




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Efforts to Ban Flavored Tobacco Products Expanded in 2019

Vape may be the intended target, but flavor bans continue ensnare cigars and pipe tobaccos. >BY THOMAS BRIANT

s we look back on tobacco legislation during the past year, perhaps no issue has seen greater prominence than legislation that would ban flavored nicotine vapor and flavored tobacco products. In fact, these bans on flavored tobacco products can include prohibitions on selling flavored cigars and most pipe tobacco.

Initial efforts to ban flavored products began in California in Sonoma and Contra Costa County, that adopted bans in 2015 and 2016, respectively. Next, large cities began to follow suit. Legislation was initially enacted in Oakland and then San Francisco in 2018. At the same time, dozens of other local governments were introducing legislation. Flavor bans were being considered in local legislative hearings nearly every week in California.

By the end of 2018, over 60 local governments in California enacted or attempted to enact ordinances that would ban flavored tobacco products and the debate included Sacramento and Los Angeles and state legislation was introduced before the end of last year.

Anyone who believed the issue might be less prominent in 2019 could

not have been more wrong. In fact, the opposite happened. In the last 12 months, there have seen an additional 173 flavor ban bills pursued at various levels of government. Many efforts were pursued in response to a groundswell of media reports focused on increased youth experimentation with vapor products and an outbreak of lung injuries that many initially (and some still incorrectly) associate with legal nicotine vapor products. Recently, both the FDA and CDC have confirmed that over 2000 incidence of serious lung injuries including multiple deaths appear to be unrelated to nicotine vapor products, but almost exclusively to additives present in illicit THC products.

While media reports that became prevalent during the second half of 2019 focused attention on nicotine vapor products, the attention has only intensified efforts by tobacco control groups that seek not only to ban flavored vapor products, but for years have looked to ban menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars, pipe tobacco and smokeless tobacco products. Clearly, many organizations that advocate for restricting the sale of tobacco

products are seizing the opportunity to propose these kinds of bans.

The reality is that each of these products are very different from one another whether one considers how the products are used, who is using the products, the health impacts of each product, and the trends related to illegal youth usage. In fact, youth smoking rates are lower now than they ever have been. Youth usage rates of other tobacco products have been trending downward for years and continue to be very low. The absurdity of many of these bans is illustrated by the fact that all pipe tobaccos are flavored. The average pipe tobacco consumer is 58 years old. Banning those products does nothing to protect children. It only inconveniences adult consumers and harms responsible retailers.

Banning or severely restricting the sale of products to adults always comes with unintended consequences. Not only do such bans reduce government revenue and harm retailers, but they encourage illicit markets and criminal activity. When markets operate legally for adults, compliance efforts can ensure that anyone selling illegally to youth can be held accountable. Criminal enterprises selling products in back alleys or out the trunk of cars—whether it be vapor products, cigarettes, cigars, or other tobacco products don't check IDs, often don't sell regulated products and are subject to no compliance checks. Despite this reality, efforts to ban these products for adults do not seem likely to wane anytime soon.

This is why retailers need to build relationships with their local lawmakers now and educate them on the importance of tobacco product sales to their businesses and the impact of banning entire product categories. These education efforts need to be on-going to prevent wholesale bans of all flavored tobacco products.

Thomas Briant is executive director of the National Association of Tobacco Outlets (NATO), Toll-free: (866) 869-8888, Web: www.natocentral.org.



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Smokelessupdate ** CHEW, SNUS & VAPES

Dryft Sciences, LLC Formed by Kretek International to Focus Exclusively on Dryft Nicotine Pouches

Kretek International, Inc., the largest importer, marketer, and distributor of specialty tobacco products in the United States, announced in September the formation of a new operating company, Dryft Sciences, LLC., that will focus exclusively on Dryft nicotine pouches., Kretek has distributed the oral nicotine products in the United States since July 2016. Going forward, Dryft Sciences will lead the national rollout of Dryft nicotine pouches by substantially expanding production capacity, distribution, and marketing efforts.

Kretek has named Jason Carignan as president of Dryft Sciences. Most recently Kretek's chief marketing officer, Carignan joined the company in 2014 and is credited with the strong growth behind Kretek's many brands and subsidiaries, including Djarum, Ventura Cigar Company, Phillips & King, and Tobacco Media Group (TMG). Carignan will



be shifting his responsibilities at Kretek to focus solely on the growth of Dryft Sciences.

"The time is right for Dryft nicotine pouches," says Carignan. "With changing consumer behaviors and retail trends, the oral nicotine category is growing rapidly around the world. We predicted the broad shift away from traditional tobacco products and launched Dryft nicotine pouches in July 2016. Our initial sales and marketing efforts proved very successful with consumers and retailers, and we recognized the need to create a new company focused solely on realizing our vision of bringing innovative nicotine solutions to the broader market."

Under Carignan's leadership, Dryft Sciences will be responsible for all marketing, operations, and manufacturing of Dryft products globally. Dryft Sciences will expand manufacturing of Dryft nicotine pouches via a new U.S. manufacturing site, which will have the capacity to produce 30 million cans in 2020 and 60 million cans by 2021. The product itself will remain unchanged, but Dryft Sciences already introduced a revamped brand identity at the NACS show in October, featuring a new label design, new branding elements, and a new consumer website. Kretek will be the exclusive distributor of Dryft nicotine pouches, utilizing its well-established channels and experienced sales force to extend reach and drive business results.

Smokeless, tobacco-leaf-free, and spit-free, the discreet Dryft pouches can be used almost anytime or anywhere and are available in three nicotine strengths (2mg, 4mg, and 7mg) and eight different flavors (Spearmint, Wintergreen, Dragon Fruit, Citrus, Black Cherry, Cinnamon, Coffee, and Peppermint). The national rollout of Dryft is planned to begin in January 2020.

Dryft Sciences, LLC, Moorpark, Calif., Toll-free: (888) 502-1325, Web: getDryft.com.

Timber Wolf Snuff Marks 25 Years

two varieties of fine cut; and five varieties of pouches.

25 years ago, Swedish Match's Pinkerton Tobacco Co. launched Timber Wolf with a simple mission: to save customers money on their dip. Today, whether it's loose, pouches, or tubs, the company is still working to save customers money. "Timber Wolf's cans aren't shiny and don't have a logo molded into the lid," the company notes, but they seal tighter, preserving the tobacco's moisture and flavor and cost less to make. In all, Timber Wolf offers seven varieties of long cut;



Fontem Adds Fresh Mint to myblu Intense Liquidpods

Fontem Ventures B.V. has released the latest addition to its myblu Intense line—specially formulated nicotine salt e-liquids that deliver a faster, more familiar "punch" to the vaping experience-with the release of the new Fresh Mint variant.

Fresh Mint is a cooling blend of wintergreen and spearmint available in 2.4% and 3.6% nicotine strengths. Each package contains two Liquidpods (1.5ml each) compatible with the myblu device and myblu starter kit, and has a suggested retail price of \$9.99.

Blu's flavors are made in the U.S.A. with domestic and imported ingredients, consisting only of nicotine, propylene glycol, vegetable glycerin, natural, and artificial flavors. Fresh Mint joins blu's seven other Intense Liquidpod flavors: Neon Dream, Melon Time, Citra Zing, Tobacco Chill, Honeymoon, Mintsation, and Tobacco Intense. Fontem Ventures, Charlotte, N.C., Email: bluretail@blu.com, Web: myblu.com, fontemventures.com.







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1100 PDATE ** MERCHANDISE & NEWS FROM THE PIPE WORLD

BriarWorks Adds Classic Straight Bulldog

The BriarWorks Classic C53 Straight Bulldog adds a beloved, and often requested, classic shape to the company's lineup. It features the diamond shank and double bead lines that define the shape but is slightly more compact than some classic bulldogs.



"The C53's proportions give

it visual weight without being heavy and while it's compact enough to fit in a coat pocket it doesn't feel like a nose warmer and has enough bowl capacity for a leisurely smoke," the company adds. Offered in dark blast, dark rusticated, vintage walnut, dark smooth, and light smooth finishes, all with black stems. Suggested retail, \$155. Briarworks, Columbia, Tenn., Tel: (931) 223-8985, Web: briarworks.com.



STG Relaunches Iconic Dunhill Blends Under its Peterson of Dublin Brand

Earlier this year, Scandinavian Tobacco Group (STG) announced it had purchased the trademarks of numerous pipe tobacco brands owned by B.A.T. that were marketed under the Dunhill brand. The rights to the Dunhill brand were not part of the transaction, and STG has relaunched the mixtures under its Peterson of Dublin mark.

"Rest assured: Nothing else changed!," STG has announced. "The blends are made at the same factory, using the exact same recipes consumers have enjoyed for years." In fact, Denmark's Orlick Tobacco, a division of STG, was already the contract manufacturer of Dunhill pipe tobaccos for B.A.T. Eight iconic blends have now returned under the Peterson of Dublin label.

Mixture 965 is a full strength English-style mixture of natural Cavendish, Latakia, and Oriental presented in a ribbon cut;

Flake is medium-strength pure Virginia flake;

Early Morning Pipe is a delicately flavored, but non-aromatic, mixture of Virginia and Oriental tobacco in a ribbon cut:

The "Royal Yacht" Mixture is an aromatic, full-strength Virginia blend.

Nightcap is flavorful combination of premium Virginia, Latakia, Oriental, and sweetyet-peppery Perique tobaccos;

De Luxe Navy Rolls is a medium strength, non-aromatic flake mixture of Virginia and Perique tobaccos;

Standard Mixture is a full strength but balanced blend of Virginian, Oriental, and Latakia tobaccos presented in a course-cut mixture, and;

Elizabethan Mixture, a full strength English blend, offers a twist on the classic blend of dark Virginian and Perigue, matured under pressure and heat to produce a deep and unique flavor.

Scandinavian Tobacco Group Lane Ltd., Tucker, Ga., Va., Web: stglanepipe.com.



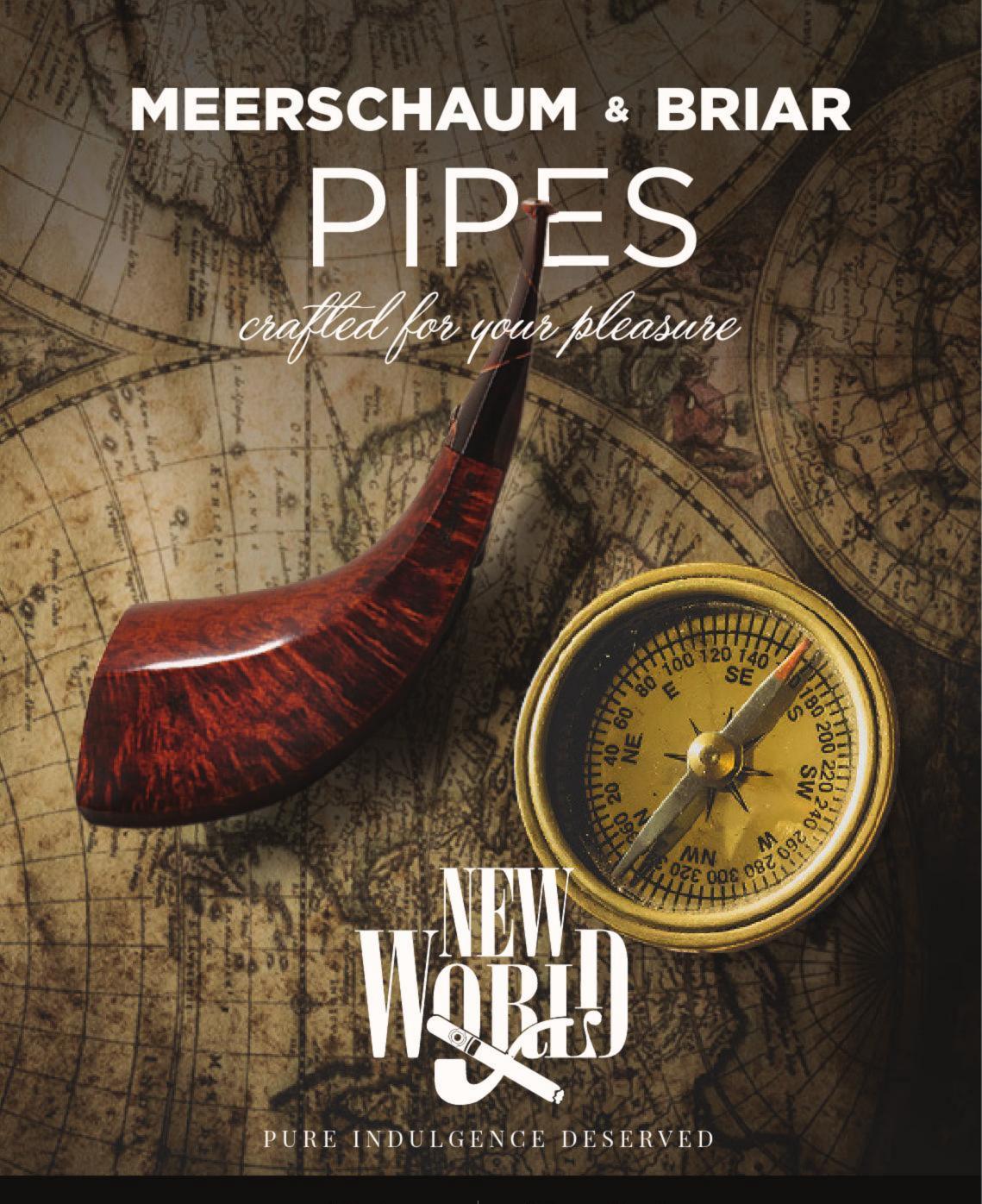
Warped Cigars, Cornell & Diehl Release The Haunting

In a first-time collaboration, Kyle Gellis, president of Warped Cigars, worked closely with Jeremy Reeves, head blender of Cornell & Diehl Pipe Tobacco, over a period of several months to bring the boutique cigar manufacturer's youthful energy and blending expertise to the world of pipe tobacco, beginning with the new blend, The Haunting.

A blend of the finest Virginia tobaccos and AA Dominican Criollo leaf—a varietal Gellis has used for a range of his best-selling cigars—The Haunting bridges the gap between fine pipe tobacco and boutique cigars, offering a full, balanced profile that's strong enough to satisfy cigar smokers yet complex enough to hold the interests of pipe smokers.

"The goal of the collaboration was to explore the role of cigar leaf in pipe tobacco in an innovative way that challenges preconceptions about both cigars and pipe tobacco. While many pipe tobacco blends on the market feature cigar leaf, The Haunting showcases the natural nuances of its AA Dominican Criollo tobacco. Its base is rich, dark, and earthy, with brighter highlights and a creamy finish."

Laudisi Enterprises, Inc., Little River, S.C., Tel: (843) 491-4150, Email: Sales@laudisi.com, Web: laudisi.com, cornellanddiehl.com.



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Brand NEWS >>>> PREMIUM & LUXURY TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND OTP

La Coalición, Crowned Heads' New Drew Estate Collaboration, is Now Shipping Nationwide

Crowned Heads and Drew Estate have announced the nationwide shipping of their collaborative release, La Coalición, manufactured by La Gran Fabrica Drew Estate in Estelí, Nicaragua and sold through Crowned Heads.

La Coalición is described as an "astonishing" and "spectacular" collaboration brand for the "true cigar aficionado" and "premium cigar fanatic."

Drew Estate Master Blender Willy Herrera says the blending process led him and Crowned Heads founder Jon Huber to select a "beautiful" dark Connecticut Broadleaf wrapper that "bursts with flavor," paired with a spicy Sumatran binder and aged fillers from Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

La Coalición is shipping in four vitolas, each carefully blended by Herrera and Huber to bring

its own very specific and unique nuance and complexity and presented in 20-count boxes: Corona Gorda (5" x 46), \$219 retail per box; Gordito (5 1/2" x 50), \$245 per box; Siglo (6" x 52), \$270 per box; and Sublime (6 1/2" x 54), \$299 per box.

"Jon and I have always had a similar palate for what notes we are looking for in our blends," said Herrara. "Working together, we knew from the beginning we wanted to utilize the dense, oily Connecticut Broadleaf wrapper which is the inspiration for this killer smoke. La Coalición is a passion product that Huber and I are really proud of."

Added Huber, "I feel that our aesthetic towards cigars are similar and we also share a common respect and passion towards the tradition of premium cigars...being able to tap into the creative juggernaut that is Drew Estate has been an amazing experience." Crowned Heads, LLC, Nashville, Tenn., Web: crownedheads.com.





Gurkha Releases Holiday Gift Stocking Sets

Gurkha Cigars has created the perfect holiday gift for cigar lovers, unveiling two versions of a unique gift set that features some of their most popular cigars.

Both gift sets include a tactical stocking, six premium cigars, and a cutter. One version comes with cigars from the Dominican Republic (two each of Gurkha Real Toros, Cellar Reserve 15 Year Toros, and Cellar Reserve 21 Year Hedonism) and the other with six cigars from Nicaragua (two each of Treinta Limitada Belicosos, Treinta Toros,



and Treinta Limitada Figurados). Both sets have a suggested retail price of \$69.95. Gurkha Cigars, Tamarac, Fla., Web: gurkhacigars.com.



Foundation Cigar Adds The Grasshopper, **Event-Only Pack**

Foundation Cigar Co. has introduced a new event-only cigar pack, The Grasshopper. It contains five rolled principally with Nicaraguan tobaccos: two cigars with San Andres Mexican wrappers, two cigars with Candela wrappers, and one cigar with a barber pole combination of San Andres and Candela. The binder is Corojo from Jalapa Nicaragua and the filler contains tobaccos from Estelí, Condega, and Jalapa Nicaragua. Each stick measures 5 1/4 x 52. This pack will be available with purchase of other Foundation boxes and only at events that Foundation Cigar's founder and blender, Nicholas Melillo, attends.

The five-pack's name refers to a lesser-known etymology of the word cigar and its linguistic origins in Spain. "Ciggara" in Spanish means grasshopper and with the insects filling local gardens with their loud chirps, Spaniards called the gardens ciggarals, or "places where the grasshoppers are thickest." As private Spanish gardens became popular for growing tobacco, "cigar" naturally emerged as the word for the final product. This interpretation profoundly struck Melillo as the most logical etymological explanation for the word cigar that he had come across.

The Grasshopper debuted on November 2nd at the anniversary event of Ligero Tobacco House in Buford, Ga., home to the nation's only Foundation Cigar lounge.

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Roll4You, s.r.o. is a leading private label rolling paper supplier to the global market. The company combines 150 years of cigarette paper making with the latest production processes, top technology, and co-operation with international tobacco companies.

The company's factory in the Czech Republic is situated in the beautiful foothills of the Jeseníky Mountains in North Moravia. This mill with three paper machines was founded in 1861. The mill is fully upgraded and continually invests in the latest R&D facilities to improve its expertise. Environmental compliance is of prime importance and quality systems are certified with ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. Additionally, the raw materials responsibly sourced and certified by PEFC and FSC – Chain of Custody.

Roll4You has been a rolling paper specialist since 1910, producing customized products. Customers can choose

from regular to slow burning cigarette paper grades, made from a choice of fibres - wood, textile, mixed cigarette paper - in various weights, ranging from 12 g/m² up to 23 g/m². All in all, over 30 paper grades are at your disposal to choose from. And a rolling paper is not complete without an excellent gum - Acacia or other Natural gums.

Finally, your brand in rolling papers can be produced in a complete line of sizes, such as:

- Shorts
- Shorts Cut Corner
- · Shorts Double Window Booklets
- 1 1/4, 1 1/2
- King Size Slim
- King Size Regular
- Rolls



LaMIRADA

► LaMirada Cigars, With 13-Year-Old Connecticut Wrapper and Classic Elegance, to Debut in 2020

Bahama Mamas, LLC has announced the release of LaMirada limited edition premium cigars, an upscale companion brand to the company's Bahama Mamas series. Made in the Dominican Republic, LaMirada is the result of a joint effort between Bahama Mamas and Tabacalera Palma to relaunch these exquisite rich and complex cigars in four classic sizes.

Using 13-year aged true Connecticut shade wrapper and a complex blend of three different filler tobaccos, LaMirada achieves a classic balance of body and

smoothness in an elegant, contemporary new package.

"LaMirada represents the culmination of our work together, not only to deliver a timeless line of cigars, but also an updated brand cache that premium cigar smokers can make their own," explained Roy MacLaren, president and c.e.o. of Bahama Mamas LLC.

> LaMirada translates from Spanish as "a glance" or "a look" or "the view," depending on how it's used in conversation. It can feel worldly or intimate to match the cigar occasion.

"When we bought the Bahama Mamas company, we set our sights on bringing its larger cigars up to today's premium standards

at a value price point," MacLaren continued. "We did that. Now we're moving further along with a rebranding of a classic. We can now deliver two premium brands with unique differences at two price points for the tobacconist." LaMirada cigars will be available to premium tobacconists beginning January 2020.

Bahama Mamas Cigars are the branded successor to Havana Honeys' larger sizes, flavors, and blends, originally introduced in 1997 and rebranded in 2009 in a range of natural leaf imported sizes.

Bahama Mamas LLC, Charlotte, N.C., Toll-free: (866) 316-1991,

Email: sales@bmcllc.us, Web: BahamaMamasCigar.com.

Warped Cigars Ships La Colmena Unico Especial, Followup Release to 2014 Limited Edition

Warped Cigars in late October shipped the first followup release of its limited edition La Colmena Unico Especial which first debuted five years ago. "Initially in 2014, the release was 1,000 tins of 10 and with the 2019 release, we are only releasing 950 tins of 10," explained Warped Cigars founder Kyle Gellis in an announcement. The cigars were rolled at El Titan de Bronze in



Little Havana, and feature the "signature Ecuadorian DeFlorada wrapper you all know and love of La Colmena," said Gellis.

Gellis said he smoked one from the original releases from 2014 from tin #0001 of the 1,000, and said "the blend over the years has just gotten better and better, and will continue to age gracefully."

Warped Cigars, LLC, Jupiter, Fla., Tel: (561) 366-7204, Email: retailers@warpedcigars, Web: warpedcigars.com.



►Villiger Updates La Libertad Presentation

Villiger Cigars announced that its highly rated Villiger La Libertad now features an elegantly designed new cigar band, that prominently features the Villiger handmade premium cigar logo. The Villiger La Libertad originally featured a band with only the name "La Libertad" displayed.

Villiger North America President Rene Castañeda said: "The Villiger La Libertad is a cigar that is personal favorite and we are happy that this high rated brand will now be properly represented as a Villiger brand."

The Villiger La Libertad (which translates to the word 'freedom' from Spanish) is made in the Dominican Republic at the ABAM factory by Master blender Matias Maragoto. Medium in strength, this cigar is known for its complex flavors. It starts with initial impressions of nutmeg, cinnamon and crushed peanuts, transitioning to cedar intonations and black tea with a floral finish, according to Villiger. The cigars are now packaged in 20-count hinge-lid lacquered boxes and expressed in four vitolas—Robusto (5 x 52), Torpedo Box Pressed (5 1/2 x 52), Churchill (6 1/2 x 50), and Masivo (6 x 60)—with a suggested retail price of \$6-\$7 per stick.

Villiger North America, Miami, Fla., Tel: (786) 655-9800, Email: info@ villigercigars.com,

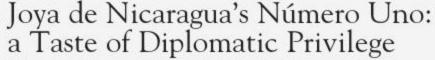
Web: villigercigars.com.

▶ Gurkha Nicaragua Series, an Invited Retailer Exclusive, is Now Shipping

Gurkha's Nicaragua Series, a special edition cigar that has launched as an invitation-only product to Gurkha's top retailers, began shipping in early October. Invited stores are only allowed to buy five boxes per size per store; Gurkha said the cigar will be made available to all retailers by next year.

This Nicaraguan puro is a "medium to 3/4 full smoke," made by Aganorsa Leaf from Corojo 99 and Criollo 98 Aganorsa filler; a Corojo 99 Aganorsa double binder; and an Aganorsa corojo 99 Clara wrapper leaf from Nicaragua. The cigars are available in four sizes in 20 count boxes: Robusto (5 x 52), suggested retail \$9.75 each; Toro (6 x 54), \$9.95 each; Magnum (6 x 60), \$10.95 each; and Belicoso (6 1/8 x 52), \$10.95 each.)

Gurkha Cigars, Tamarac, Fla., Web: gurkhacigars.com.



Número Uno was originally blended for world leaders, handed out by Nicaraguan ambassadors on official missions around the world. But now, Joya de Nicaragua is releasing it nationwide as part of Obras Maestras, the designation company's ultra-premium family of cigars.

The cigar uses a delicate, silky Ecuadorian Connecticut shade wrapper over a Nicaraguan binder and Nicaraguan

fillers, delivering medium body and strength in a smoke that is "refined, complex, and elegant, with "creaminess complemented with light pepper notes."

"Número Uno was developed as a unique gift and later an event-exclusive cigar, and although it wasn't the original intention, we decided to make Número Uno available to a bigger audience," said Dr. Alejandro Martínez Cuenca, Chairman of Joya de Nicaragua. "However, it will remain as something exclusive, as production will be limited to 1,500 boxes a year for the global market and will be available only in selected retailers around the globe"

This blend comes in only one vitola, L'Ambassadeur, a 6 5/8 x 44 tailed lonsdale parejo. In the United States, it is available only at Drew Diplomat Retail Partner (DDRP) brick and mortar stores, in 25 count boxes, with an suggested retail of \$15 per stick. Its packaging, featuring blue lacquered Spanish cedar boxes, has been "delicately designed" to "address the brand's essence."

According to Juan Ignacio Martínez, executive president of Joya de Nicaragua, production of the cigar is slower than other company products, because only a select group of very skilled rollers are assigned to this project.

"With Número Uno, along with Cuatro Cinco and Cinco Décadas, the Obras Maestras family now provides a wider selection of flavors, aromas and strengths that cater to ranging palates of connoisseur smokers. However, what they all offer is the unique experience of enjoying the best cigars crafted by the most seasoned torcedores from the oldest cigar factory in Nicaragua.

Joya de Nicaragua, Estelí, Nicaragua, Web: joyacigars.com. Distributed by Drew Estate, Miami, Fla., Tel: (786) 581-1800, Web: drewestate.com.





Villiger Cigars Unveils Cuellar Black Forest

Villiger Cigars has announced the release of the Villiger Cuellar Black Forest, a line extension to the Villiger Cuellar Connecticut Kreme that marries Caribbean artisan tobacco craftsmanship with German/Swiss folklore, culture, and mysticism. Inspired by the mystical Black Forest, located on the Southern side of Germany close to the border of Switzerland where the Villiger headquarters resides, the new blend features a dark, rich, oily, and flavorful maduro wrapper over Dominican fillers and binder.

A medium to full-bodied, full-flavored cigar, Villiger Cuellar Black Forest boasts deeply rich flavors with a distinct sweet finish which sets it apart from other blends, according to Villiger chairman of the board Heinrich Villiger and master blender Jochy Blanco who produces the new blend at Tabacalera La Palma in the Dominican Republic.

Four sizes are offered, with suggested retail prices from \$7.80 to \$8.40: Robusto (5 x 48), Toro Gordo (6 x 54), Churchill (7 x 50), and Torpedo (6 1/4 x 52).

Villiger grew up close to the Black Forest, which is the birthplace of many familiar legends, fairy tales, and haunted happenings. The area derives its name from a hundred mile stretch of large pine trees which block the sunlight from reaching the forest ground, where a constant fog creates an eerie, unnerving ambiance that has given birth to legends of werewolves, haunted monasteries, castles, and ancient Celtic cemeteries. German-based authors, the Brothers Grimm based many of their dark fables on the Black Forest.

Productshowcase *** SMOKING ACCESSON **ACCESSORIES**



>Zippo Releases Torch Butane and Electronic Arc Inserts

Zippo lighter owners can customize their units with the newest Zippo accessory, a new range of lighter inserts. These new accessories are available in single (\$14.95 retail) and double torch butane options (\$19.45) or a rechargeable electronic arc model. The pressurized butane inserts offer an odorless flame, while the arc offers a completely windproof flame source that can be easily recharged. All three insert models are rugged, durable, and built to last. They are designed to fit all regular-sized Zippo lighter cases (not Slim or 1935 Replica cases) and retain the famous Zippo "click" sound.

The Butane Lighter models are feature an adjustable bright blue, clean, high-precision "torch"

> flame that deploys at the push of the piezo ignition button, offering

an odorless heat source that lasts longer than before and heats up to 2,300°F. Both units are refillable with

butane fuel and have a have a 0.9g fuel capacity.

The Arc Lighter Insert utilizes two powerful plasma arc beams that cross to create ignition, activated by a double

tap push-button ignition designed to prevent accidental activation in purses, coats, pockets, etc. The double beam insert offers a windproof flame source that can easily be recharged in about 1 hour through its micro USB port and included cable. The 200 mAh IEC battery delivers about 40 5-second lights per charge, has a blue indicator light that conveys charging status, and has a 300-charge lifespan. The unit features a 10 second time out safety feature.

All units are backed by a two-year Zippo warranty and come packaged in a Zippo 'one box' gift box.

Zippo Manufacturing Company, Bradford, Pa., Tel: (814) 368-2700, Web: zippo.com.

> Cigar Club Plunge Cigar Cutter from Tommy Bahama

Made with rich lacquered mahogany, this desktop plunge cutter is ideal for any true cigar enthusiast. Its stainless steel blade offers reliable cutting and can handle a 60-ring-gauge cigar with ease. Just insert your cigar, press down on the plunger, and enjoy a perfect cut. The front is decorated with the phrase "Stay Lit," while the back is adorned with Tommy Bahama's custom "Cigar Club" design. A convenient tray catches the clipped ends, while a felt-lined base protects against scuffs and scratches.



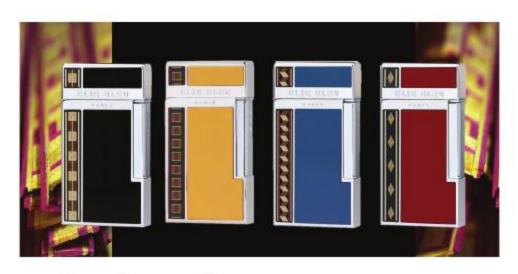
Ventura Cigar Company, Moorpark, Calif., Web: venturacigar.com.



>Xikar Adds Hero Series Limited Edition Xi2 Cutters

Industry-leading cigar accessory maker Xikar has announces the limited edition Hero Series of its Xikar Xi2 cutters. This collection celebrates heroes with three limited edition cutters featuring a thin red line representing firefighters; a thin blue line representing police officers; and the digital camouflage flag representing the armed forces. The Xikar Xi2 features the iconic Xi silhouette, but constructed of a lightweight nylon-fiberglass composite making it durable and easy-to-carry. These double guillotine cutters feature stainless steel blades that can cut up to 60 ring gauge cigars and feature graphics printed on both sides of the body. Suggested retail is \$59.99, supported by Xikar limited lifetime warranty.

Quality Importers Trading Company, Weston, Fla., Toll-free: (888) 795-4839, Web: qualityimporters.com.



> Elie Bleu Rolls Out Marquetry Jet Flame Cigar Lighters

The marquetry decorations on Elie Bleu's J-14 torch flame lighter models replicate the marquetry featured on its Alba humidor collection, providing retailers an opportunity for either standalone or add-on sales as the company continues to expand its concept of matching families of accessories. The meticulously crafted inlaid designs are made from small pieces of variously colored wood, painstakingly cut and assembled entirely by hand in the grand French tradition known as "element by element" marquetry. Lighters feature all-brass case construction, the company's exclusive cigar diamond jet burner system technology, piston cap operating system, side ignition, view tank window with level gauge, half moon flame adjuster, fuel cover, and rhodium finishes. Four different styles are offered—Black, Yellow, Blue, or Red lacquer—each featuring its own unique inlaid marquetry design. Suggested retail, \$299.95.

Reyns International, Warwick., R.I., Tel: (401) 921-5216, Email: orders@reynsint.com, Web: eliebleu.com.

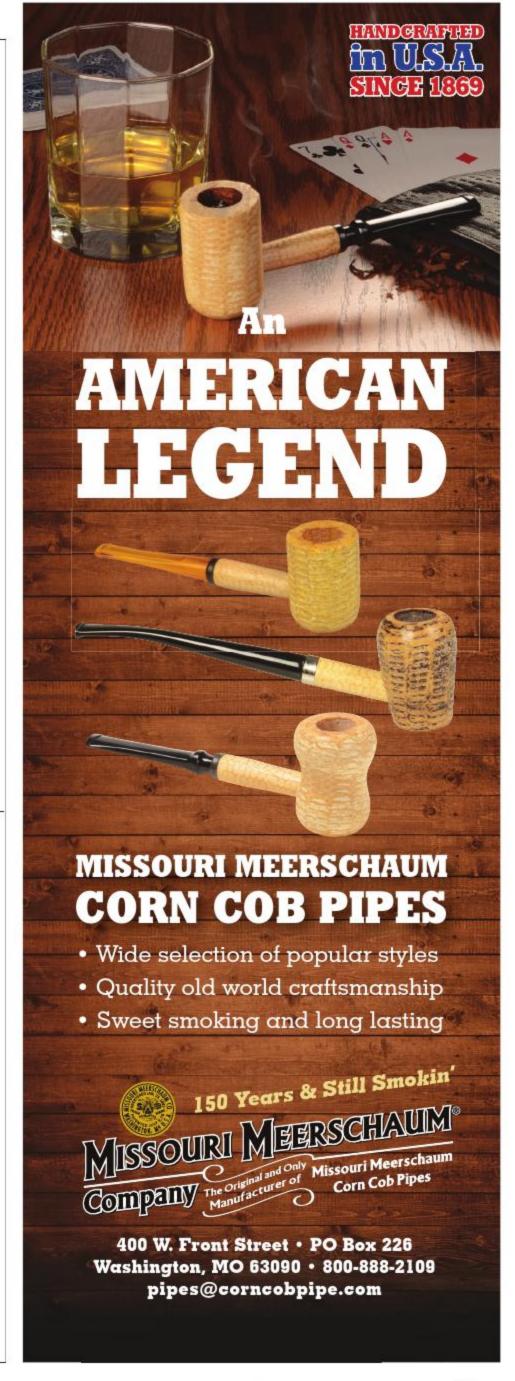
> Zino Z-Collection Adds **Z80** Humidors

The Z80 humidor comes in a modern design combining a wooden look with fresh accent colors. The result are striking blends: natural oak with red accent: black oak with mint accent; and gray oak with cyan

accent (shown). The humidors are equipped with the proprietary Zino slim self-regulating humidification system that provides optimal storage conditions for up to 80 cigars, ensuring 70-72% relative humidity. Fully lined with premium Okoumé, an odorless and tasteless wood to prevent flavor

transfer to cigars and equipped with a tray and dividers; this eye-catching, mid-size humidor is an easy answer to keeping cigars in perfect condition.

Davidoff of Geneva USA, Pinellas Park, Fla., Tel: (727) 828-5400, Web: davidoff.com.



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Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.